United Nations S/2006/365

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 June 2006

Original: English

Letter dated 6 June 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I present my compliments to you and, upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a letter dated 24 May 2006 from Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, requesting the Security Council to consider the lifting of sanctions imposed on Liberia under Security Council resolution 1521 (2003) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Lami **Kawah**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

06-37804 (E) 090606

Annex to the letter dated 6 June 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Government of Liberia presents its compliments and avails itself of this opportunity to request the lifting of the regime of sanctions imposed under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1521 (2003). The resolution revised the basis for action under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to reflect the changed circumstances in Liberia. It dissolved the Committee established under resolution 1343 (2001) and established the 1521 Committee. It further imposed for a period of twelve months, revised prohibitions in connection with arms, diamonds, timber, and the travel of designated individuals.

The Liberian Government believes that Resolution 1521 (2003) was necessitated by the rapid changes occurring both in Sierra Leone and Liberia as well as the sub-region. For instance, at the time of its passage, peace and security had generally been restored to Sierra Leone with all stakeholders, including the RUF which had been transformed to a political party, playing key roles in process. The initial principal objective which Resolution 1343 (2001) sought to achieve, was for the government of former President Taylor to sever any link between Liberia and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), end the crisis and restore democratic rule in Sierra Leone, and curtail any threat of insecurity in the sub-region. Under Security Council Resolution 1343 (2001), the Government and people of Liberia were given assurance that the sanctions were to be applied even handedly and in a non-porous way, and that having complied with the demands of the Security Council, it will fulfill its commitment and lift the sanctions. Those demands have since been met, giving rise to the changed situation which necessitated Resolution 1521 (2003)

The Government of Liberia has fully complied with the demands in paragraphs 4(a), 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, of Resolution 1521 (2003) and taken additional measures to satisfy the demands of the United Nations Security Council for the lifting of the sanctions on Liberia.

With specific reference to the demands in paragraph 4(a) of resolution 1521 (2003), the Government of Liberia is pleased to note that Liberia, Sierra Leone and the sub-region are at peace, former President Charles Taylor is currently in the custody of the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone, and that most of the individuals considered to be of threat to peace in the sub-region are positively engaged in the country either in private business or public offices. Additionally, the war in Liberia has ended; all combatants disarmed and demobilized, and a democratic government elected. Currently, the military and security sectors are undergoing reform and restructuring in keeping with the terms of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Accord.

In respect to the diamond industry, the Government of Liberia has effected the following measures:

1. An Act providing for controls on the export, import and transit of rough diamonds was passed into law in 2004. The Act lays out the basic procedures and processes for the productions, sales, export or transit of Liberian rough diamonds;
2. Through assistance from the High Diamond Council in Belgium, a sample of the Kimberley Process Certificate for use by Liberia upon the lifting of sanctions has been designed;
3. A National Diamond Certification and Database Center which is currently under construction with assistance from the US Government will be ready for occupancy in June. In an effort to support Liberia's participation in the world diamond trading market, the US Government recently initiated a US$1.4m program to assist Liberia in implementing the Kimberley Process;
4. In collaboration with the United States Geological Survey through the Futures Group, a geological assessment was conducted in April of this year. This assessment is a cardinal requirement for membership in the KPCS as it determines the diamond potential of a participating country;

5. The Government has instituted several measures including the training of mineral inspectors and mining agents, establishment of regional offices, conducting the re-demarcation of all mining claims through cadastral survey aimed at satisfying the requirements of the KPCS;
6. With the assistance of the UNDP Monrovia office, Government is undertaking the diamond for development (D4D) initiative which will organize small scale miners into cooperatives to ensure that a portion of the sale value of minerals produced in any given community for development purposes through the District Development Committees (DDCs);
7. The Government, in collaboration with the UNDP and UNMIL will organize a Regional Diamond Conference in Monrovia from June 28-30, 2006 with aim of discouraging the illicit mining and trade in diamonds, and at the same time address issues on the harmonization of policies, taxation, legal frameworks, environmental concerns and labor practices; and
8. The Government played host to a Kimberley Process Technical Review Team which visited the country from 22-27 May, 2006 to verify what has been achieved by the Government in meeting the requirements of the United Nations Security Council and the Kimberley Process Certificate Scheme.

Excellency, the Government of Liberia is aware that in spite of the immense sacrificial efforts being exerted to meet the conditions for lifting the regime of sanctions, there continue to be certain unlawful action on the part of those bent on frustrating these positive attempts, to the detriment of the Liberian nation-state AND the country international image. Forceful actions by the government is underway to address this problem.

Concerning the timber industry, the following actions have been taken by the Government of Liberia:

1. Enhanced the capacity of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) by organizational restructuring and new management; training of personnel in forest law enforcement; chain of custody grading and scaling, forestry inventory among others; amending laws to allow for independent monitoring; establishment of the Liberia Forest Initiative 2004 comprising the US Government, European Commission, World Bank, etc.

2. Commissioned audit of the FDA for the purpose of transparency and accountability. Also adopted a system of depositing all forestry revenues in Government accounts instituted at the Central Bank of Liberia under control of the GEMAP Controller and the Managing Director of the FDA;
3. Reviewed and declared all seventy concession agreements null and void abinicio as per Executive Order #1 issued by the President. Forest Reform Monitoring Committee also established to address efficiency in future concession administration. While the export of timber products is strictly restricted, pit sawing is allowed to supply timber for domestic market only. Addendum to concession agreements reflecting conservation policies and environmental policies under preparation;
4. With World Bank assistance, FDA is conducting a forest inventory to ascertain the potential value of forest resources and to provide information for monitoring, taxation, and enforcement;
5. Undertaking park protection and development program. This exercise has allowed for the removal of illegal miners from Sapo National Park and deployed trained park personnel and FDA staff to the Sapo National Park and Nimba Nature Reserves; and
6. Fully participate in donors meeting and other promotional activities as well as undertake bilateral discussions.

Excellency, the severe social, humanitarian and economic effects of the sanctions on the Liberian Government and the general population are well documented in the Report of the Panel of Experts in pursuance of paragraph 14(e) of Resolution 1607 (2005) concerning Liberia. Your own reports have highlighted the dehumanizing humanitarian and economic plight the Liberian nation has been subjected to. A New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Humanitarian Response and Post-Conflict Recovery Sub-Cluster report on Liberia specifically indicated in 7.3.1 that "Liberia faces severe unemployment and underemployment problems, as well as dehumanizing urban and rural poverty levels. Estimates in 2003 indicate that

85% of the labour force was without jobs. All reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts must focus on creating employment and reducing poverty. It would be difficult to defend patterns of economic growth that do not result in substantial poverty reduction, since the post-conflict political and economic order will largely depend on it. It would be preposterous to expect peace and stability in a society where 85% of the people live below the poverty line and are deprived of such basic necessities as adequate nutrition and access to safe drinking water, minimum schooling, primary healthcare and gainful employment". The report made it clear that "progress in poverty reduction in Liberia will come through broad-based economic growth, complimented by efficient provision of infrastructure and social services such as education and health care."

It is highly unlikely that the Government of Liberia can make any significant stride in poverty reduction and the provision of social services when the diamond and timber industries, two significant life wires in the economy of the country continue to be under United Nations sanctions. Additionally, the continued existence of the regime of sanctions is a direct threat to the newly installed peace process and the democratic government which was instituted in its wake. Peace is a pre-requisite of economic recovery, growth and development. Without the guarantee of enduring peace, economic recovery and development can not be assured. Imagining peace in an atmosphere of severe deprivation and poverty is an illusion.

Finally, the government asks for a review of circumstances regarding sanctions in the travel of designated individuals. This review should take into account the fact that such sanctions were imposed because of the relationship with involvement in activities of former President Taylor. In those cases where no such relationship continues to exist or there is no risk to the security of Liberia by activities of those individuals, the government seeks to have these sanctions lifted to send a clear signal to all that law abiding citizens of good behavior that they can enjoy the rights granted them by the Liberian constitution.

Your Excellency, it is against this background, especially not to allow the costly investment in the search for, and restoration of peace in Liberia, that the recent ECOWAS Ministerial Conference held in Monrovia on May 15, 2006 called on the United Nations to lift the sanctions on the country for the new government to have access to needed resources to execute its

programmes and improve the standards of the people. The conviction of the ECOWAS Ministers was that if a democracy such as ours does not produce quick dividends, especially with regard to employment for the youths, the provision of basic socio-economic infrastructure, and security sector reform, the tendency for apathy and cynicism to set in is high, and this poses direct danger to such democracy.

Excellency the lifting of sanctions on Liberia will also simultaneously compliment calls for international economic assistance to consolidate the gains already made. The United Nations can not and must not be seen as contradicting its own goodwill or mitigating its own massive investment in the search and restoration of peace in Liberia.

In this regard, the Government of Liberia recommits itself and looks forward to a more positive and rewarding engagement with the international community, particularly the various organs of the United Nations, and requests the United Nations Security Council, through Your Excellency, to empathize with the suffering people of Liberia and have these sanctions suspended or lifted.

(*Signed*) Ellen **Johnson-Sirleaf**